

# **Behavioral Health Services Disaster Response**

**Your Role as a Disaster Service Worker**



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# The County's Role in a Disaster



# The County's Role in a Disaster

The role of the County is to lead in all areas of emergency management to:

- Plan/Mitigate
- Prepare
- Respond
- Recover



# County Office of Emergency Services

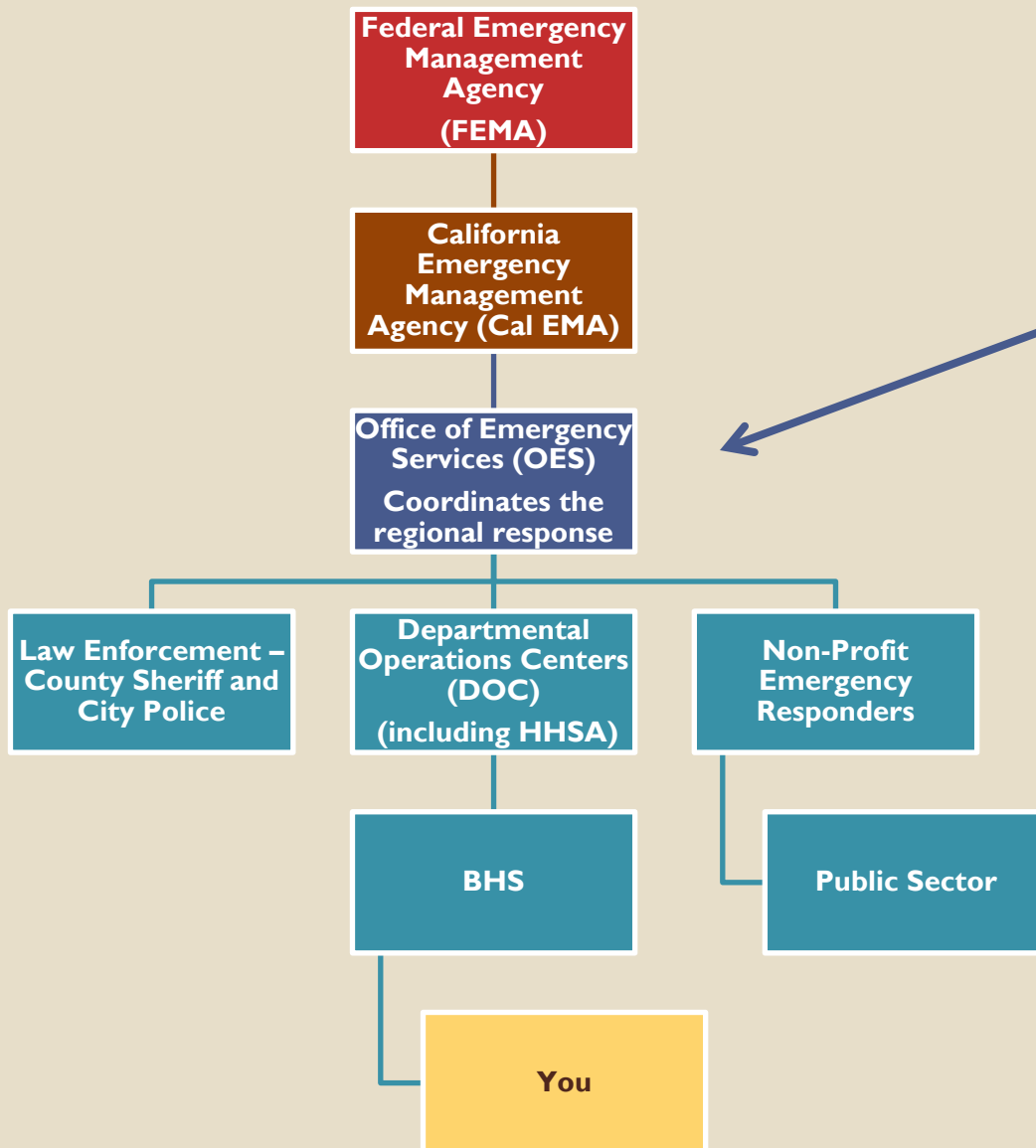
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The Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates the overall County response to disasters. OES is responsible for:

- Alerting and notifying appropriate agencies when disaster strikes.
- Coordinating all agencies that respond.
- Ensuring resources are available and mobilized in times of disaster.
- Developing plans and procedures for response to and recovery from disasters.
- Developing and providing preparedness materials for the public.

# Disaster Response Hierarchy



OES staffs the Operational Area Emergency Operations Center (a central facility which provides regional coordinated emergency response), and also acts as staff to the Unified Disaster Council (UDC), a joint powers agreement between all 18 incorporated cities and the County of San Diego. The UDC provides for coordination of plans and programs countywide to ensure protection of life and property

# Disaster Operations Governance

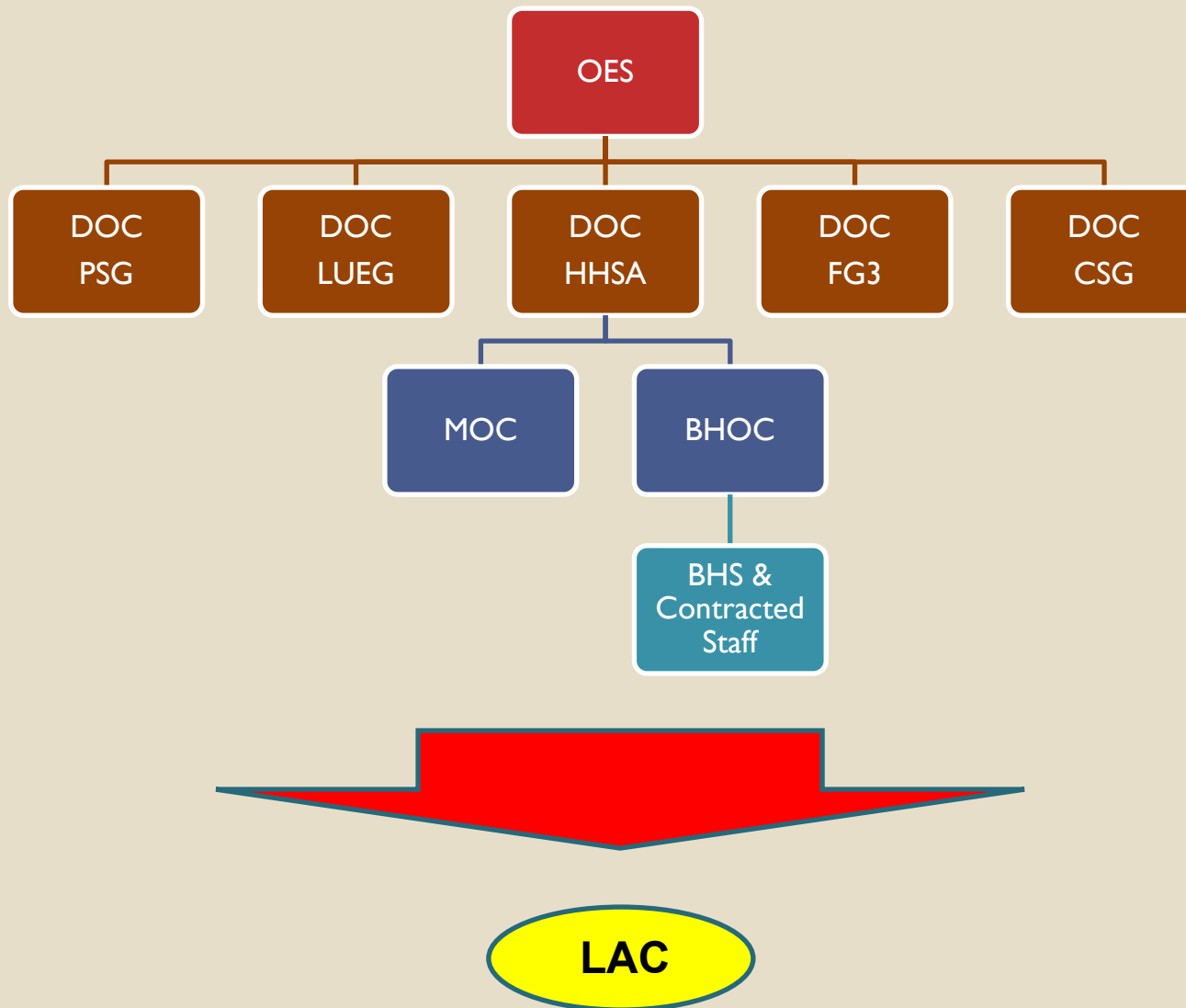
## **Unified Disaster Council**

- In this capacity, OES is a liaison between the incorporated cities, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, as well as non-governmental agencies such as the American Red Cross.

## **Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS)**

- SEMS is the method for managing response to multi-agency and multi-jurisdiction emergencies in California. SEMS provides for a multiple level emergency response organization and is intended to structure and facilitate the flow of emergency information and resources within and between the organizational levels. The SEMS system was created in response to the 1991 Oakland Hills Fire (and as required by Government Code §8607 (a)).

# Disaster Response Operations



- Each Department of the County activates a Departmental Operations Center (DOC) during a disaster, to coordinate services.
- Some services within HHSA operate their own centers; Medical Operations Center (MOC), and the Behavioral Health Operation Center (BHOC).
- These operation centers are able to assign workers to the Local Assistance Centers (LACs).



# Local Assistance Centers



# “One Stop Shopping”

- A Local Assistance Center (LAC) is a temporary, regional headquarters where people can come to get a variety of services during, or following, a disaster.
- Each LAC may be comprised of several government and public entities and service types, depending on the situational needs.
- Services provided may include:
  - Information and assistance;
  - Water and meals;
  - Emergency first aid, or trauma care;
  - FEMA guidance; and
  - **Counseling services including mental health and substance abuse screenings and referrals.**



# When is the LAC activated?

- OES declares activation of LACs.
- LACs are activated as quickly as possible after the onset of a disaster – usually within the first week.
- LACs are activated according to the extent of the disaster/emergency, and the needs of the community.



# LAC Structure

- Each disaster response site will likely be different depending on available resources.
- Each LAC will have a manager.
- The LAC manager will likely have daily meetings to field concerns, provide direction, and issue status reports.
- If BHS is present at the LAC, there will be a BHS Site Lead who will manage the BHS response. They will provide guidance to you on your responsibilities, and field your concerns.
- The BHS Site Lead is also in regular contact with the BHOC to ensure needed information flows both ways.



# BHS's Role in a Disaster

- Behavioral Health Services, along with all divisions of HHSA, reports to the Departmental Operations Center, to provide coordinated services as needed.
- BHS staff may be assigned to work at Local Assistance Centers, providing behavioral health services, or, they may be assigned elsewhere, as needed.



# Your Role in a Disaster





# Your Role in a Disaster

- As County employees and contracted service providers, you are a vital part of the San Diego County Operational Area Emergency Plan.
- The County's goal is to be prepared in advance, reduce the loss of life, and minimize damages.
- You may help achieve stabilization in emergencies and disasters, and/or assist during the initial steps toward recovery and restoration.



# BHS & the Local Assistance Center

While you may be called upon to serve in a number of roles during a disaster situation, this training focuses on the BHS responsibilities at the Local Assistance Centers (LACs).

- During the wild fires of 2003 and 2007, BHS was called by County OES to staff local assistance centers in the communities of Ramona, Julian, and more.





# Your Responsibility

- **Under State law, all government employees are Disaster Service Workers (DSW).**
- **If you are a contractor,** depending on your contract and program, **25% to 50%** of your staff is required to complete this training. You may be called upon to serve as a DSW to provide service to the population impacted by disaster.



# Disaster Service Workers are Critical<sup>18</sup>

Your role as a Disaster Service Worker can be vital to the well being of those impacted by disaster. You are among the first line of response after emergency services, such as the fire department and law enforcement agencies, have cleared the way.



# The LAC – Local Assistance Center

- Depending on the magnitude and duration of a disaster situation, the County may activate one or more Local Assistance Centers (LACs).
- You may be called to staff an LAC, or other community center, or to perform outreach during recovery.
- Depending on the scale of the event and needs of the community, you may be required to perform other duties, such as serving meals, directing traffic, or providing other assistance.
- Your flexibility is required and appreciated.



# If Called to Serve

- When called to staff a County LAC or other site, you will normally be contacted by the BHS Disaster Coordinator directly.
- You will be asked which shifts and dates you are available.
- Reporting instructions, such as where to report and other details will be provided by an assigned BHS employee.



# For Your Comfort at the LAC

The LAC could be housed in a school building or other community location. You could be in a tent. You may experience long days and a less than ideal environment. Be prepared to be self-sustaining:

- Wear comfortable shoes.
- Dress comfortably and in layers so you can adjust to varying temperatures.
- LACs will attempt to provide basic needs for both clients and DSWs. If the shelter provides meals you will normally be fed too. But please bring your own food and drinks, just in case.





# When You Get to the LAC

1. Report to the BHS LAC lead, who is ideally located at a table with chairs for meeting with clients.
2. Note that the site will NOT be marked as *Mental Health* or *Behavioral Health* at all, to avoid stigmatization of individuals seeking assistance, but will be marked as “**Counseling Services.**”
3. Importantly, please note that your response is not for traditional counseling services, but to provide individuals with someone to **listen** to and to **empathize**.



**Click the YouTube link below to view the video!**

Please take a moment to watch this brief video example of the kind of assistance that you may typically be called upon to provide, called [Psychological First Aid - YouTube](#).

When completed, please exit and return to this PowerPoint.

# “Mental Health First Aid”

## Remember the acronym **ALGEE** as a Mental Health First Aid\* Strategy:

- **A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm.
- **L**isten non-judgmentally.
- **G**ive reassurance and information.
- **E**ncourage appropriate professional help.
- **E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies.



\*Mental Health First Aid” was created by Professor Anthony Jorm, a respected mental health literacy professor, and Betty Kitchener, a nurse specializing in health education. The program is under the auspices of the ORYGEN Research Center at the University of Melbourne, Australia.

The National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, the Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Missouri Department of Mental Health worked with the program’s founders to bring Mental Health First Aid to the U.S.

For more information see <http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org>.

# BHS Service to Clients

1. Meet the basic physical needs of clients, such as food, shelter and clothing.
2. Next, provide psychological support by allowing them to talk about their experience, if they desire.
3. Then, assist the individual to reunite with friends and family; this will provide great comfort.
4. If someone has other greater emotional needs, what can you do?



- a) Consult your BHS site lead for assistance.
- b) You may also direct individuals to the following (or call yourself) for help, information, and referrals for service, 24/7, toll-free:

**Access & Crisis Line 1-888-724-7240** – talk with professional counselors.

**2-1-1** Phone or on-line <http://www.211sandiego.org/> resource and information hub for community, health and disaster services.



- The LAC is a community effort. When things slow down take the opportunity to get to know the other community providers; introduce yourself and the services we provide.
- Stay connected and informed so that they may direct clients to you, and, so that you may direct clients to the other services that are available.

- If you have time, walk around and keep an eye out for people who look like they could use your help.

## You will need to track:

- The number of client contacts (a simple count – no personal or HIPAA info to collect)
- Your service information, such as # of hours worked, and mileage. (To the right are examples of the reports; these are subject to change.)

<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 2px 10px; margin-bottom: 5px;">[ EVENT NAME ] RESPONSE TIME-TRACKING REPORT</div>									
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO - HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY									
Employee Name:				Employee ID#:				Report Time Period:	Date:
Class/Instructor Name:				Class/Instructor #:				From:	
Class/Shift Name:				Class/Shift #:				To:	

Date	Time Start/End	Event Finished	Total Response Time	Total Response Time	Total Response Time	Classroom or Other	Location	Progress	Description of Refill(s)
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TITLE - <i>write in name of event</i>		LOCATION:
LOCAL ASSISTANCE CENTER		
DAILY TALLY SHEET		DATE:
PROVIDER NAME	NUMBER OF CONTACTS - indicate with tally marks; e.g. 2 contacts = II or 4 contacts = IIII	TOTAL
AM		
1		
2		
3		
PM		
1		
2		
3		

Closing worker: Total the daily contacts on this form and fax to Closing to BRS Admin, at (615) 565-2780. After faxing, file this document in the BRS Daily Tally Sheets folder.

NOTES (add anything else that should be documented here, and include your name)

# Prepare Now

- It is vital to keep your contact information up to date!
- If your information changes throughout the year, please notify us.
- If you have never registered, please do so now.

**\*Use this form:** [Click here](#) to download the *Disaster Service Worker's Contact Information Form*.

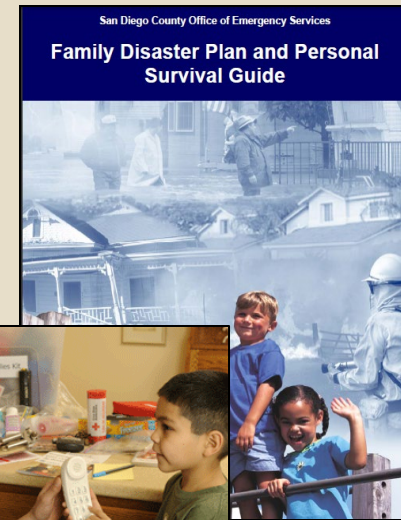
**\*Please complete it and email to:** [patricia.manriquez@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:patricia.manriquez@sdcounty.ca.gov)

# BHS LAC Leaders

- **During LAC activation:** please communicate your needs to the BHS LAC Leader. If you do not know who this is call Behavioral Health Services Administration at (619) 563-2700.
- The LAC Leader will provide you with resources and tracking documents at the LAC as possible.

# More Preparation

- In the event of activation, you may be called upon with a moment's notice to get yourself to the LAC.
- Prepare your home and family now.
  - You will find it reassuring to plan for the needs of your family and home in advance of a disaster.
  - Remember, you may not be able to reach your loved ones from the LAC.
- Keep a disaster kit in your vehicle.
- Develop habits like keeping your cell phone charged, your gas tank above 1/4 tank, and stashing some cash.
- See [www.ReadySanDiego.org](http://www.ReadySanDiego.org) for more information on how to prepare.



# Summary Action Steps

- Make certain your contact info is up to date. (See slide #26)
- Have your personal disaster plan in place.
- When called to serve:
  - Bring snacks, meals, and water.
  - Dress comfortably.
  - Bring your cell phone—fully charged please!
- Remember to Self Care; that is, eat, rest, and find healthy ways to relieve stress.



*Thank You!*



*Live Well San Diego*